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SUBJECT: JANUARY 17 MFA PRESS BRIEFING: IRAN, SENIOR DIALOGUE,
TAIWAN, SINO-GERMAN RELATIONS, UK PM BROWN VISIT, ACTIVIST HU JIA

1. Key points at the January 17 MFA Press Briefing:

-- Iran Chief Nuclear Negotiator Saeed Jalili is visiting Beijing January 17-18 for meetings with Chinese officials.

-- During Senior Dialogue meetings this week, China will exchange views on important issues of bilateral interest with the United States. The U.S.-China relationship is one of the most important bilateral relationships in the world.

-- China hopes the United States will make "a firmer opposition" to the "Taiwan independence movement" and "separatist activity," including Taiwan's "independence referendum."

-- China values its bilateral relationship with Germany and hopes that relationship will move forward on the basis of "non-interference and mutual respect."

-- China highly values the visit this week of U.K. Prime Minister Brown, who is traveling to Beijing for meetings to discuss trade issues, environmental protection and sustainable development.

-- China is a "country of law" and handles human rights cases such as Hu Jia's in accordance with law.

Iran Nuclear Issue

2. At the January 17 regular MFA press briefing, in response to a question asking whether China will back tougher sanctions against Iran, the spokesperson said that Iran Chief Nuclear Negotiator Saeed Jalili is visiting Beijing January 17-18 for meetings with State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan and Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi. China and Iran will exchange views "on bilateral relations and the Iran nuclear issue." China's position on Iran is "consistent," the spokesperson said. "We hope Iran will abide by UN resolutions and demonstrate flexibility in working with the international community." The spokesperson said that the international community should resolve the Iran issue peacefully through negotiation, and added that China hopes the international community will intensify diplomatic efforts to promote "early resolution" of this issue.

Senior Dialogue

3. The spokesperson said Chinese leaders are holding high-level meetings with Deputy Secretary Negroponte this week in Beijing and Guizhou, where the Senior Dialogue will take place. In meetings yesterday, China said that it views the U.S.-China bilateral relationship as "the most, one of the most important bilateral relationships" in the world. This week, the two countries will continue to "exchange views on important issues of interest," to strengthen bilateral cooperation in "handling all issues." Strong, stable relations between the United States and China serve the interests of both countries and the world.

Taiwan

14. In response to a question asking whether China in meetings with Deputy Secretary Negroponte had requested the United States to take specific action concerning the upcoming "independence referendum" in Taiwan, the spokesperson said that Foreign Minister Yang told the Deputy Secretary that "a firmer opposition" to the "Taiwan independence movement" and "separatist activity," including the referendum, is of great significance to the bilateral relationship as well as to peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait. China applauds the United States' reiteration of its adherence to its one China policy and opposition to the "independence referendum."

15. In response to a question about whether China expects countries to seek permission before ships transit the Taiwan Strait, the spokesperson said only that China will continue to handle port calls in Hong Kong "according to the principle of sovereignty." China hopes the United States will honor its commitments vis-à-vis its one China policy and act with prudence to safeguard peace in the Taiwan Strait. Asked about reports of an incident between the USS Kitty Hawk and Chinese ships during the Kitty Hawk's recent sailing through the Taiwan Strait, the spokesperson said she was "not aware of the reports."

Sino-German Relations; U.K. PM Brown's Visit

16. In response to a question about China's reaction to German Chancellor Merkel's recent statement affirming the value Germany places on its relationship with China, the spokesperson said that China "values the Chancellor's remarks" and hopes the two countries can "handle" the bilateral relationship from a "long-term and

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strategic perspective." In an oblique criticism of Chancellor Merkel's 2007 meeting with the Dalai Lama in Germany, the spokesperson said the Sino-German relationship should move forward on the basis of "non-interference and mutual respect."

17. Questioned as to whether China will ask visiting U.K. Prime Minister Brown not to meet with the Dalai Lama later this year, the spokesperson said she could not anticipate the exact issues that will come up during Brown's meetings with Chinese leaders. China highly values Prime Minister Brown's visit, which will cover trade issues, environmental protection, sustainable development and other issues.

Human Rights: Hu Jia and Zhao Ziyang Anniversary

18. Asked about reports that the U.S. Government has raised rights activist Hu Jia's case with Chinese officials, the spokesperson said that China handles cases such as Hu Jia's according to law. Some countries, she said, are trying to interfere with China's internal affairs using human rights as a pretext. She said China is "seriously delivering its obligations on human rights." Asked about harassment of citizens wishing to observe the anniversary of Zhao Ziyang's death, the spokesperson said "civilian activities should abide by law."

RANDT